



## AMERICAN RED CROSS

Approximately 120 prisoners of war, recently released from \_\_\_\_\_  
 were on the <sup>ships</sup> transport in the Harbor awaiting transportation to the States/  
 Most of the group, composed of Navymen, Marines, and a few civilians attached  
 to the Navy, had been given \$100.00 each of back pay to meet expenses enroute  
 to the States. <sup>home</sup> Because of some technicality the 28 Marines and two civilians  
 were unable to draw any pay, and the Chaplain's contribution of \$5.00 to  
 each had not gone far. Morale hit what was probably an all time low for these  
 men without money. ~~In prison all had been equally deprived of~~ Commander  
 \_\_\_\_\_ and Commader, leaders of the group, themselves former Prisoners, the  
 Chaplain, the Ship's Surgeon, and Special Services Appealed to Red Cross as  
 the only source of help.

We sat in the Commander's cabin and listened to the Commander's story.  
 Food in quantites of the best quality obtainable was being provided at frequent  
 intervals, but after three year's of starvation and uncertainty, some could not  
 resist sneaking off food from the table at night for fear this was only an  
 illusion. Whole boxes of candy bars would be consumed in a day, and in spite  
 of resultant illness, they demanded more candy again. Even a few of those who  
 had been paid \$100.00 felt so keenly the wish of additional money, that a firm  
 stand had to be taken by their able leader, whose clear thinking and reasoning  
 did much to bridge the gap between prison and home life. (Ones who didn't get paid)

On liberation each had been given one set of clothes. Now Red Cross  
 and Special Service were providing candies, gum, cigarettes, and many comfort  
 items. There was plenty to eat. There would be a nation awaiting to acclaim  
 them when they arrived home, food at the best places, comfortable housing,  
 transportation, even telephone calls to their homes, and to each a watch. <sup>in addition a special gift</sup>  
 But there was the present gap to be filled. <sup>the 30 days between here and the States</sup> The need to feel money  
 in their pockets was important in itself, the need to feel equal with the





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others who had been paid. It had not mattered so much in prison when all suffered privation alike. Too, next to the desire for food, there was of course the need of cigarettes and "a light", to write, they needed a pen, and neither lighters or pens could be bought at home. Special Service was prepared to obtain these for them here. Then too there were all the little comfort items and extra bits of food which could be purchased at the Ship's Store. But most of all, there was a need for extra items of clothing to ~~help~~ have a change of clothing during the next month, and this was more important than ever to those who had lived so long in the filth of the prison. All agreed there was a real need, that it must be met quickly, and that Red Cross was the one to meet this need.

We went to lunch, and after lunch the former Prisoners were assembled and told that Red Cross loans were available to those who had not received the \$100.00 partial pay. Volunteers quickly cleared away the tables and an improvised Red Cross office hastily set up. Time was short. The boat might leave at any time and the purchases must be made that afternoon.

The USO Show would open on deck at 1:30. There was now little more than half an hour before the show would begin. Marines lined up first. They had a remarkably healthy look, false though it was in many instances. Now and then a lad walked up, even now almost too young to be in the service, but "the records showed" he was of age. A few were on crutches, an occasional arm or leg missing, now one who could not hear, others whose seeing had been impaired.

With the assistance of  
The hospital Supervisor, the Field Director, an Assistant, and two secretaries ~~made-out~~ loan papers. were made out, signed, and the boys were off to the show.

Time for talk was brief, but there was an occasional chat with some one from the home town. An occasional incident was told.

We all settled down to talk over the day's experiences and to





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compare stories while we waited for the Area Accountant to arrive with what was now a foreign exchange to us - American Dollars.

The show was over, the line again formed, and the Prisoners now had money in their pockets again.

We all stayed for a "thank you" dinner, and afterward on deck had our first real opportunity to visit with the prisoners and hear their stores of hardship in prison.

It was the "Case of the Month" on this base, and to most of us it was the "Case of our Red Cross Career." The principle of Red Cross that in giving financial assistance "need is the governing factor" had been met, and the spirit of Red Cross defined by John W. Davis when Solicitor General of the United States as a philanthrop organization which acts "for the American People in all those ways which they seek to express to the country's defenders their affection, sympathy or gratitude.